IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of classifying ~~one or more~~ a plurality of images, said method comprising the steps of:

displaying an iconic representation of each of the [[said]] images on a graphical user interface;

creating an association between ~~at least one of said~~ the plurality of images and ~~at least one predetermined metadata~~ an item representing a classification of [[said]] the plurality of images [[image]], in response to the iconic representations ~~representation~~ of [[said]] the plurality of images [[image]] being positioned within [[a]] an empty ~~client~~ area ~~of said~~ on the graphical user interface; and

generating [[an]] a single new iconic representation of ~~said predetermined metadata~~ the item representing the classification of all of the plurality of images, for display on said graphical user interface, based on [[said]] the created association.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of creating an association between at least a further ~~one of said~~ ~~images~~ image and said ~~at least one metadata~~ item, in response to the iconic representation of [[said]] the further image being selected and moved to a position ~~defined by said~~ ~~displayed metadata~~ of the iconic representation of the item.

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4.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein [[the]] iconic representations of ~~the metadata~~ items are arranged according to a hierarchical structure.

5.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, further comprising an updating step of updating said hierarchical structure based on ~~metadata~~ items associated with at least one of said images.

6.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said association between said <u>plurality of images</u> [[image]] and said ~~at least one~~ predetermined ~~metadata~~ item.

7.   (Currently Amended) A method of <u>according to claim 1,</u> ~~classifying one or more images, said method comprising the steps of:~~

        ~~displaying an~~ <u>wherein the</u> iconic representation of <u>the item is configured for searching the associated images</u> ~~each of said images on a graphical user interface;~~

        ~~creating an association between at least one of said images and at least one metadata item representing a classification of said image, in response to the iconic representation of said image being positioned within a client area of said graphical user interface; and~~

        ~~generating an iconic representation of said at least one metadata item, for display on said graphical user interface, based on said created association, wherein said metadata representation is configured for searching on said image.~~

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8. to 21.   (Cancelled)

22.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for classifying ~~one or more~~ a plurality of images, said apparatus comprising:

display means for displaying an iconic representation of each of [[said]] the images on a graphical user ~~interface~~ interface;

creating means for creating an association between the plurality of images ~~at least one of said images~~ and ~~at least one predetermined metadata~~ an item representing a classification of [[said]] the plurality of images [[image]], in response to the iconic ~~representation~~ representations of [[said]] the plurality of images [[image]] being positioned within an empty [[a]] ~~client~~ area ~~of said~~ on the graphical user interface; and

generating means for generating [[an]] a single new iconic representation of ~~said predetermined metadata~~ the item representing the classification of all of the plurality of images, for display on said graphical user interface, based on [[said]] the created association.

23. to 24.   (Cancelled)

25.   (Currently Amended) A ~~computer program product comprising a~~ computer readable medium having recorded thereon a computer program for classifying ~~one or more~~ a plurality of images, said program comprising:

code for displaying an iconic representation of each of [[said]] the images on a graphical user interface;

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code for creating an association between ~~at least one of said~~ the plurality of

images and ~~at least one predetermined metadata~~ an item representing a classification of

[[said]] the plurality of images [[image]], in response to the iconic ~~representation~~

representations of [[said]] the plurality of images [[image]] being positioned within an

empty [[a]] ~~client~~ area ~~of said~~ on the graphical user interface; and

code for generating [[an]] a single new iconic representation of ~~said~~

~~predetermined~~ ~~metadata~~ the item representing the classification of all of the plurality of

images, for display on said graphical user interface, based on [[said]] the created

association.

26. to 30.   (Cancelled)

31.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~each~~

~~said metadata~~ the item comprises at least one of a field of said iconic representation of ~~said~~

~~metadata~~ the item, a field of a label of ~~said metadata~~ the item, a field of a reference to said

associated image and a field of a type of ~~said metadata~~ the item.

32.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31, wherein a

value of [[said]] the field is editable by a user.

33.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31, wherein a

value of ~~at least one said~~ the field is obtained from said associated image.

34.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein [[said]] each of the ~~associated image~~ images is a region of a corresponding larger image.

35.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, wherein [[said]] the updating step comprises the step of designating one ~~said metadata~~ item as a child item of a parent ~~metadata~~ item in response to an iconic representation of ~~said one metadata~~ the item being dropped on the iconic representation of [[said]] the parent metadata item.

36.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 35, further comprising the step of associating with [[said]] the parent ~~metadata~~ item at least one image associated with [[said]] the child ~~metadata~~ item.

37.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, wherein said updating step comprises the step of creating a new ~~metadata~~ item in response to the selection of plural iconic representations of ~~metadata~~ items and the positioning of said selected iconic representations at an empty point within said ~~client~~ area, and designating said selected ~~metadata~~ items as child ~~metadata~~ items of said new ~~metadata~~ item.

38.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of associating with said new ~~metadata~~ item at least one image associated with one of said child ~~metadata~~ items.

39.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, wherein said updating step comprises the steps ~~of:~~ of:

creating a new ~~metadata~~ item in response to the iconic representation of said associated image being dropped on the iconic representation of a second ~~metadata~~ item, wherein said new ~~metadata~~ item is a copy of said predetermined ~~metadata~~ item; and

designating said new ~~metadata~~ item as a child metadata item of said second ~~metadata~~ item.

40.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, wherein said hierarchical structure of iconic representations of ~~metadata~~ items is displayed as a tree structure with expand icons indicating whether a parent iconic representation is open and displaying child iconic representations.